

Reports

Preparation for the realignment of Department of Juvenile Justice Youth: A study of the population, Best practices for Rehabilitation, and Evidence-Based Recommendations (SANDAG, 2021)

Seeking Alternatives: Understanding the **Pathways** to Incarceration of High-Risk Juvenile Offenders. (SANDAG, 2015)

SANDAG Realignment Report 2021

Recommendations

- Utilize validated assessments to understand a youth's individual needs and match them to the appropriate services.
- Select CBT program(s) that can be implemented with quality and fidelity for all youth and combine them with more targeted programming to address individual needs.
- Provide an array of therapeutic services, including groups, mentoring, and individual counseling, to allow for the diversity of needs of this population.
- Provide consistent and frequent opportunities for families to engage in treatment with the youth while detained. This responsiveness includes having the physical space to accommodate family visits and programming.
- Recent research on traumatic brain injury (TBI) has increased the understanding of TBI and the juvenile justice population. As such, raising the awareness of how brain injuries can manifest in behaviors easily interpreted as delinquent and defiant could be beneficial to identifying and treating youth who have a TBI. Thus, instituting training for staff/PO on how to screen for TBI, the effects of TBI on behavior, and how to support youth with possible TBI (referral for neuropsychological evaluation if needed or other services) is recommended.

Recommendations

- Leverage local community college, adult education and universities to provide post-secondary opportunities in custody that can also be continued when released. This includes identification of academic supports, financial aid, bridge counselors, access to computers, and space to study while detained.
- For youth wanting to pursue trades, identify career and technical programming that translates to livable and sustainable wages, ample employment opportunities, and certifications or licenses.
- For youth needing to complete high school, establish collaborations and/or policies with educational institutions to ensure continuity of care from community to in custody schooling, including IEPs and existing learning assessments. To support educational success, attention to academic supports including tutoring and literacy improvement and career/education planning are recommended

Recommendations

- Consider partnerships with nearby counties that have already created built environments based on the therapeutic philosophy (e.g., Alan Crogan Youth Treatment and Education Center) to co-locate youth in one facility. This type of co-location could lead to costs savings, while providing youth with a therapeutic, trauma informed housing environment.
- Examine the possibility of stepdown housing from the more restrictive environment of East Mesa Detention Facility to Urban Camp and weekend furloughs as part of the transition back to the community.
- Appropriate staffing is essential to the creation of a healing and therapeutic milieu. This includes employing a range of professional (e.g., licensed clinicians, contracted professionals, probation officer) who embrace the therapeutic approach, are well trained, and held accountable for creating and maintaining a safe, strength-based, and trauma informed environment.

Recommendations

- Institute policies and procedures to ensure fidelity to model for each program, including- procedure manuals, monitoring tools, staff training, and corrective action processes.
- When appropriate, employ licensed clinicians, mental health professionals, and other community experts to provide programming instead of Probation and Correctional officers.
- Continue to work with Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform to develop and implement SPEP

Recommendations

- Incorporate the national best practices in reentry to support the needs of this specific population. These supports include, but are not limited to, assessment-based planning, reentry planning while in custody, case management to help facilitate transitions to needed community supports (e.g., housing, treatment, vocational and educational needs), consistent and frequent family engagement, and inclusion of the supervising Probation officer and other community stakeholders (e.g., education, treatment, employment, and/or housing) in the reentry planning to support a smooth transition.
- Explore the opportunity for collaborations with adult education, local colleges, vocational schools, and employment resources to facilitate smooth transition from detention to community. These connections can occur while in custody and the case manager or reentry specialist can help the youth connect upon release.

Pathways SANDAG Report 2015

- **Recommendations** Institute standardized trauma screening, provide indicated family-based treatment, and develop an interconnecting treatment and service delivery system that spans the child welfare system, schools, law enforcement, the behavioral health system, the juvenile justice system, and community-based services to reduce involvement in the justice system

Recommendations

- Increase the availability of evidence-based alcohol and drug intervention in the schools and the community. Identify and implement early warning systems of AOD use within schools to be able to respond quickly with effective developmentally appropriate interventions.

Recommendations

- Systems need to exhaust every effort to maintain a connection and enrollment to the youth's home school. These actions should include revision of school policies to reduce reliance on suspensions and expulsions for non-zero tolerance offenses and once removed from school (through placement in detention facilities or court schools) prioritize efforts to reintroduce youth to their home schools

Recommendations

- Improve continuity of care by improving integrated data collection and data sharing across systems to allow for comprehensive documentation of services received, including type, dosage, and outcome. Create a cross system of treatment standards and quality assurance processes in order to ensure fidelity to evidence-based treatment models and maximize treatment outcomes.

Recommendations

- Increase community-based alternatives to detention and confinement. Research has shown the value of providing services in the community and the lack of effectiveness incarceration has on recidivism. Adoption of policies that increase fiscal resources for effective alternatives to detention and confinement for those youth who do not pose a threat to public safety is in alignment with promising and/or evidence-based practices. Increase the use of a system of graduated incentives and sanctions thereby utilizing proven behavioral modification techniques that can reduce reliance on detention for minor infractions.

Recommendations

- Improve individualized service plans for youth that address their specific alcohol and drug issues, trauma, mental health, and educational challenges. Provide youth with individualized and monitored promising practice and/or evidence-based treatment while detained and in the community, maintaining continuity of care whenever possible

Recommendations

- Interventions need to start early and cross systems. Develop policies that support non-discretionary spending across multiple systems and require shared outcomes for systems' accountability